



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature  
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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Senate votes to curb illegal ivory industry, protect endangered animals**

*SB 913 will allow Oregon to join the fight against poaching, organized crime*

SALEM –Trafficking elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn products will become a misdemeanor offense under legislation approved by the Senate this morning. Senate Bill 913 applies to purchases, sales, offerings, possession and imports occurring on or after January 1, 2017. The bill includes exemptions for antiques and educational collections.

About 35,000 elephants are killed each year via well-financed and heavily armed poaching rings that target an ever dwindling population of elephants. While statistics vary, experts say that last year more elephants were killed than born. Numbers are even direr for rhinoceroses, with an estimated one rhino killed every eight hours.

“Here in Oregon we have a long tradition of advancing animal welfare and raising public awareness about animal endangerment. Oregonians have supported efforts to ban the cruel practice of horse tripping and outlawed ownership of exotic pets. Now it is time to extend the conservation spirit to the majestic creatures of Africa and Asia,” said Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), who has lead passage of animal welfare legislation in previous sessions. “Humans can live without ivory. Elephants cannot.”

Currently, a federal ban prohibits nearly all commercial imports, exports, and interstate sales of elephant ivory. However, experts say these laws are confusing and ineffective. This leaves ivory sales within states uncontrolled, enabling a black market for new ivory without any oversight or jurisdiction given to local law enforcement.

“As long as ivory products are acceptable in Oregon, cruelty to animals is perpetuated,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “By joining the growing movement to fight ivory trafficking, we are protecting threatened animals, continuing Oregon’s long history of leadership on animal welfare, and setting an example for other states across the U.S.”

Groups testifying in support of SB 913 included the Oregon Zoo, the Oregon Humane Society, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The bill will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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